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Poland's Prospects Over the Next Six Months

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POLAND'S PROSPECTS OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The present crisis in Poland constitutes the most serious and broadly based challenge to Communist rule in the Warsaw Pact in more than a decade. Recurrent confrontations between the regime and the unions have moved Poland ever closer to the edge of Soviet military intervention. The main factors sustaining the protracted crisis—persistent union demands, factionalism in the Solidarity leadership and indiscipline in the union ranks, the continuing erosion of party authority, and the fact that Solidarity represents a massive emotional rejection of the way the party has managed the country—are contributing to an increasingly anarchic situation which no single authority seems capable of controlling.

Although some issues are more susceptible to solutions than others, we see no prospect for the resolution of basic tensions between the workers and the regime in the months ahead. No coherent regime strategy has yet emerged to limit workers' political demands and to stem the consequent erosion of the party's authority.

Because of a poor harvest, lower labor productivity, a shorter work-week, and ongoing economic drift, economic conditions in Poland will continue to deteriorate over the next six months. If deterioration is moderate—as Polish planners hope—economically inspired civil disturbances seem unlikely in the next six months. But a swift and steep decline in living standards—capable of triggering civil disorder that could cause Soviet intervention—cannot be ruled out. This could happen, particularly if Poland (a) cannot meet its massive hard currency debt service obligations, (b) defaults, as a result, on its hard currency loans, (c) is therefore unable to borrow to finance a trade deficit, and (d) thus sharply reduces imports from the West, with serious adverse effects on production and consumption. To meet its financial obligations and keep imports at a satisfactory level, Poland will require aid from Western governments.

Party leader Kania apparently continues to enjoy Soviet support. But in an environment of continuing political instability time is working against him. Under such conditions his personal support from the Soviets and from within the Politburo will diminish. Cognizant of this liability, Kania will feel increasingly compelled in the interest of preserving his own position to initiate more forceful measures to quell domestic turmoil, and to head off conservative criticism that his "leniency" is perpetuating instability.

To limit the scale of confrontation, the regime may seek to appear more conciliatory on issues with which there is widespread labor identification and support, such as the five-day, 40-hour workweek, or to fragment opposition on such national issues by advocating locally negotiated solutions. In addition, it will probably continue the periodic show of limited force against local protests, calculating that such firmness will have a restraining effect nationally. The potential for escalation is high in a strategy of limited confrontation, given the regime's diminished negotiating flexibility and probable Soviet insistence that it stand firm in the event of confrontation.

Solidarity's national leadership has come increasingly under the influence of its more militant members. But regime efforts to factionalize the leadership, and thereby dilute its national authority, have thus far failed. While internal disputes will continue to characterize the leadership, we believe that in future confrontations it will pull together rather than pull apart.

While we believe that the Soviets will not allow the present deteriorating situation to continue indefinitely, we doubt they have established a timetable for Kania. It is their continuing assessment of Polish events and Kania's reaction to them that will decide whether the Soviets forbear, increase pressure, or use military force. Moscow retains several options short of military intervention to induce moderation by workers and stronger actions by the regime—another change in leadership, heavier political pressure, as well as a number of demonstrative military measures short of intervention.

The Soviets' reluctance to intervene militarily derives above all from the enormous costs they probably anticipate in eliminating Polish armed and passive resistance, and in reestablishing a politically and economically viable Poland. Additional disincentives are the political and economic price they anticipate they would pay in their relations with Western nations, with the Third World, and within the international Communist movement.

Whatever the Soviet perception of the costs of intervention, they will quickly fade into secondary considerations if the Soviets see their vital interests threatened. Developments that would pose such a threat include:

- A breakdown of internal order in Poland.
- A frontal assault on the regime's authority, such as a general strike of some duration to which the regime did not respond decisively.
- Indications that the Polish regime was becoming unwilling or unable to meet its Warsaw Pact commitments.

Barring such developments, Moscow will continue to give Kania time, but little additional leeway to maneuver and make concessions. We believe that the Soviets are less confident than when Kania won his 5 December reprieve that he can in fact bring the situation satisfactorily under control. The trend is decidedly negative from the Soviet perspective.

In comparison with the October-November 1980 period, the chances are greater that the Polish regime will respond with force, probably at Soviet urging, if faced with a major confrontation such as a prolonged general strike or the threat of such a major confrontation. Coercion would be used in a way designed to minimize the escalation of violence. But the difficulties of manipulating force in such a tense situation are enormous, and the probability of an eruption of violence would be high.

We seriously doubt the Polish Army's dependability if called upon to quell large-scale violence, and we believe similar doubts prevail in the Polish leadership. In any case, we do not believe the Polish Army alone would be capable of containing the situation. The introduction of regular Polish military forces under such circumstances would run a high risk of bringing about the intervention of Soviet forces.

The size of any Soviet intervention force would depend upon Moscow's assessment of likely resistance from the Polish Army and population. We estimate that, if the Soviets foresaw the possibility of significant, organized resistance from the Polish armed forces, they would intervene with a force of at least 30 divisions. We believe they could ready such a force and activate all of the necessary communications in 10 to 14 days. If the Soviets were to undertake the kind of intervention they apparently planned in November-December under the guise of a joint exercise, we estimate an intervention force of some 20 divisions could be readied within about a week. A substantially smaller force involving some half dozen divisions (or more, depending on the extent to which the Soviets draw on ready divisions from their forces in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) could be readied in about two to three days, but we think it unlikely, given the possibility of resistance, that the Soviets would actually intervene with such a small force.

It is possible that a pattern of negotiation will develop between regime and unions which will subdue the level of confrontation, and that under such circumstances the regime could gain the upper hand by pursuing a cautious policy designed to undermine the union's strength. It is difficult to believe, however, that such a policy could succeed, given the volatile situation in Poland and diffusion of the authority of both the party and the union. Indeed, we believe Soviet pressure on the Polish regime will increase, and that if the pattern of domestic confrontation continues, the trend is toward ultimate intervention.

DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Six months after an increase in food prices sparked strikes throughout Poland, and spawned an organized workers opposition, the country's political and economic stability continues to be precarious. The brief periods of relative domestic calm which have punctuated tensions between the Kania leadership and the unions mask an inherently unstable situation. Indeed, the trend has been one of continuing economic and political demands by Solidarity or its local chapters, and the diffusion of political authority away from the party, fed in part by serious political divisions within the party itself. The present crisis constitutes the most serious and broadly based challenge to Communist rule in the Warsaw Pact in over a decade, and recurrent confrontations have moved Poland ever closer to the edge of Soviet military intervention.

2. That threat tempers the behavior of both workers and regime, but it may not be decisive in inducing cooperation and warding off an intervention. The main factors which now sustain the protracted crisis—persistent union demands, factionalism in the Solidarity leadership and indiscipline in the union ranks, the continuing erosion of party authority, and the fact that Solidarity represents the massive, deep-seated, and emotional rejection of the way the party has managed Poland—are contributing to an increasingly anarchic situation which no single authority seems capable of controlling.

II. THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY IN POLAND

3. Soviet military activity in late November and early December made the threat of intervention more credible to both the workers and the regime. This belief by key actors inside and outside of Poland, heightened by Soviet warnings to the Polish leadership and by public US warnings to the USSR, chastened the Poles. The Polish Church and the Pope assumed an unequivocal position in urging moderation and restraint on Polish workers. The national Solidarity leadership, acknowledging the gravity of the situation, declared a six-week strike moratorium. The party

appealed for restraint and professed its willingness to negotiate and compromise. Thus, the widely perceived threat of military intervention and the temporary convergence of interests it created—together with the diversion of the holidays and the greater, if temporary, availability of foodstuffs—resulted in a period of calm lasting four to five weeks.

4. Since early January the government has taken a harder line in dealing with the unions, but has only generated more resistance. Labor groups, increasingly under the influence of militant elements, pressed their demands, which, together with the hardening of the party's position, reintroduced the tensions that have dominated the past months. Two issues—demands for registration of a private farmers union, called Rural Solidarity, and the introduction of a five-day, 40-hour workweek—now provide the focus of internal tensions. In calibrating its response the party must tread the narrow line between preserving its own eroding political authority and staying within the bounds of Soviet tolerance, and responding to worker demands in a way that placates but minimizes actual concessions. Although some specific issues are more susceptible to solutions than others we see no prospect for the resolution of basic tensions between the workers and the regime in the months ahead. No coherent strategy has yet emerged to limit workers' political demands and to stem the consequent erosion of the party's authority.

III. THE WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION

5. Domestic economic conditions in Poland will continue to deteriorate over the next six months, and throughout 1981, even if Poland receives the foreign financial and economic assistance it is clearly counting on. The modest economic reform measures introduced at the beginning of this year will have little impact in the near future (and probably will not significantly affect economic performance even over the long run). Polish officials predict a decline in GNP in 1981, following decreases in 1980 and 1979. Contributors to the anticipated drop in 1981 include the repercussions on

food production of previous poor harvests, lower labor productivity, the shorter workweek and lighter work regimen in the mines, and lack of leadership control over the economy.

6. Despite the enormous 1981 payments of principal (about \$7.5 billion) and interest (about \$2.8 billion) that Poland must make on its \$25 billion debt—accumulated over the last 10 years because of an overambitious development program heavily dependent on imports from the West—Warsaw was forced to abandon the prestrike priority accorded to improving its balance of payments. Instead, it is trying to maintain living standards, or at least minimize their decline, in order to forestall public disorder.

7. This objective requires Poland to continue to run large current account deficits. To prevent the decline in coal production from reducing domestic consumption, for example, Warsaw has sharply cut coal exports even though coal is Poland's major earner of hard currency. Largely because of its emphasis on preserving production for domestic use, Poland appears to have run another large hard currency trade deficit last year—at least \$1.5 billion—and is likely to run an even larger one this year—perhaps \$2 billion. With interest payments on its steadily rising debt also growing, the current account deficit was at least \$3.6 billion in 1980 and will be over \$4.0 billion in 1981.

8. Taking other steps to free resources for use in personal consumption and in consumer-oriented investment programs, Warsaw has also:

- Announced that it will continue steep cuts in total investment initiated two years ago while raising capital outlays in agriculture, in housing, and in health, education, and cultural facilities.
- Raised food subsidies by 40 percent in 1981 to permit higher prices for farmers while keeping retail prices stable.
- Substantially increased money income for all segments of the population, with total 1981 personal income to rise by 18 percent, almost twice as fast as in 1979 and 1980.

9. Even if these plans are carried out, however, Polish consumers face a bleak year. Although the regime hopes to increase slightly the overall supply of consumer goods in 1981, it has warned that food supplies will fall. Most worrisome of all is a drop in the availability of meat; production will fall at least 10 percent

in 1981 following an estimated 5-percent decrease in 1980. Imports are expected to compensate for only a small proportion of the decline in meat production.

10. Living standards will rise marginally at best over the next six months, and are more likely to drop. Economically inspired civil unrest remains a possibility, despite the regime's retreat from austerity measures. The population, however, has shown considerable tolerance for economic hardship in recent months—in large measure, it appears, because of the new leadership's (a) candid admissions that past mismanagement and corruption have left the economy a shambles, (b) promises of actions that it maintains will bring about a rejuvenation of the economy, and (c) partial satisfaction of some of the population's political-social aspirations—for example, formation of Solidarity—which has created a temporary willingness to tolerate economic hardships. Consequently, economic hardship per se, short of a swift and drastic deterioration in living standards, seems unlikely to trigger widespread public disorder over the next several months.

11. Such a rapid deterioration cannot be ruled out, however, particularly if Poland does not receive substantial foreign financial and economic assistance. Poland must not only roll over principal payments as they fall due but must also find new funds both to pay interest on its Western debt and to permit continuation of hard currency trade deficits. If Poland cannot obtain the necessary financing and defaults on its loans, the country would be forced to balance its hard currency trade by sharply cutting imports. The impact on consumption and production would be severely disruptive, possibly triggering civil disturbances.

12. Despite the rapidly diminishing confidence of Western banks, Poland stands a good chance of rolling over much of the principal coming due, since banks evidently prefer such refinancing to outright default. But Western banks are likely to provide the new loans Poland requires to finance interest and trade deficits only if they receive government guarantees. Thus, if Poland is to avoid drastic curtailment of its purchases from the West, it will require prompt financial assistance from either Western governments or the Soviet Union, and probably from both. Large-scale assistance may be required very soon, since Poland's current account deficit in the first quarter alone is likely to be on the order of \$1 billion. Substantial Soviet aid has already been granted but not nearly enough to meet Poland's 1981 needs.

13. Poland has been candid about its need for credits and has been scrambling to line up assistance since September. It has already received more than \$2 billion in aid, part of it in hard currency, from the USSR (some of which was used in 1980) and perhaps a few hundred million dollars from other East European countries. Warsaw has also requested more than \$10 billion in various types of aid from Western governments, notably bilateral reschedulings and government-backed credits. Western countries have been generally sympathetic in considering Polish appeals because of the contribution aid can make to both political stability and the interests of Western exporters. Poland has failed to win hard-and-fast pledges of large amounts of assistance, however, largely because of the inability of Western countries to fashion a common plan for aiding Warsaw, but also because of Western doubts that Poland will ever put its finances in order.

IV. KEY ACTORS: THEIR NATURE AND EQUITIES

The Party

14. One key to Poland's short-term future is whether party leader Kania or any subsequent leader can reestablish the integrity of the party as an institution of effective political control. The evolution of Solidarity as a competing center of authority and the deterioration of party cohesion have proceeded hand in hand: some party members have resigned; many have taken up simultaneous membership in Solidarity;¹ some local party bodies have defied directives from the party center; and the freedom with which the party's past role and mistakes and the nature of its political authority have been questioned have led, not surprisingly, to widespread demands from within the party, and particularly from its lower echelons, for its decentralization.²

¹ Some of these have done so in an attempt by the party to penetrate Solidarity.

² It is probable that the longer instability in the country persists, the greater such demands will become. Therefore, ending the labor strife is related to the success of the party leadership in consolidating the party itself. Contrary to the Leninist norm under which binding policies and elections of party officials are decided at the top, demands for decentralization include changing the party statutes to provide for electing party officials for fixed terms by secret ballot, barring party officials from simultaneously holding government positions, initiating binding policies from below, and holding the top leadership accountable for its performance. We believe that demands for internal party democratization will be opposed by the party leadership, beyond superficial changes instituted for tactical reasons. Mindful of its self-preservation and the limits of Soviet tolerance, the party leadership not only will refuse to support such decentralizing changes, but also will work to restore an essentially orthodox, hierarchical party organization.

15. Kania's first political imperative is to consolidate his own political position within the Politburo and within the party as a whole. Under the banners of "reform" and "renewal," and an anticorruption campaign, a purge has been set in motion, apparently sponsored by Kania, which is not only a struggle for reform but also a strategy to rid the party of his political opponents. Kania has encountered stiff resistance from the numerous middle- and lower-level party officials, and from within the largely Gierek-appointed Central Committee, for whom "renewal" would mean a certain loss of their privileges and even expulsion or worse. Kania's efforts to reconstruct the party—within parameters that Moscow will tolerate—will not succeed, however, so long as he remains incapable of purging the party of these elements. He must proceed with more deliberate speed in purging the obdurate elements, as well as in reining in those in the rank and file—where nonetheless much of his support lies—who are pressing for far-reaching reforms as the pending extraordinary party congress approaches. The fact that the congress, initially slated for late March or early April, has reportedly been postponed to mid-May suggests that preparation for it is running well behind schedule.

16. It is difficult to assess the current constellation of forces in the Politburo except to say (a) that there probably prevails an uneasy consensus around Kania which derives from a shared interest in his near-term success in calming the situation and (b) that no organized opposition to Kania by individuals or groups has yet surfaced.³ Whether this consensus will last will depend upon Kania's success in bringing the domestic situation under control. A crucial factor, however, is Soviet support for Kania; it is unlikely that he would be unseated without the acquiescence or support of the Soviets. While Kania apparently continues to enjoy Soviet support, he may not do so indefinitely. Indeed, in an environment of continuing political instability, time is working against him and, under such conditions, his personal support from the Soviets and from within the Politburo will diminish. Cognizant of this liability, Kania will feel increasingly compelled in the interest of preserving his own position to initiate more forceful measures to quell domestic turmoil, and to head off conservative criticism that his "leniency" is perpetuating instability.

³ At the same time, some Politburo members are powerful figures in their own right and probably command some personal support from within the party. Two such figures are Olszowski and Moczar. Olszowski is reported to be a likely replacement for Kania should the Soviets withdraw their support from the present party leader.

17. It is partly for these reasons that Kania's strategy for dealing with labor opposition has hardened.⁴ His room for maneuver between the Soviets and the continuing demands of the workers, has narrowed considerably as a result of Soviet admonitions surrounding the 5 December Warsaw Pact meeting. We believe that the Polish leadership perceives that the Soviets will use force if Warsaw is unable to demonstrate progress toward the restoration of party control and the limitation of Solidarity's role. Kania is probably unsure of how much time the Soviets will allow him. The hope—which may be ill founded—is that an increasingly assertive policy, combined with the heightened awareness of the Soviet military threat, will force Solidarity to lower its demands, and weaken the movement by creating divisions within the leadership, and between it and the rank and file. At the same time, Kania must obtain a modicum of trust by the workers; he will therefore seek to avoid any all-out confrontation, to continue to advocate reform and to appear at least minimally responsive to popular demands. In addition the regime may hope that a purge of the party prior to the extraordinary congress, and the announcement of economic and political reforms, will win for it an additional increment of trust among labor and the Solidarity leadership.

18. To limit the scale of confrontation, the regime may seek to appear more conciliatory on issues with which there is widespread labor identification and support, such as the five-day, 40-hour workweek, or to fragment opposition on such national issues by advocating locally negotiated solutions. In addition, it will probably continue the periodic show of limited force against local protests, calculating that such firmness will have a restraining effect nationally. It is unlikely that such a strategy can succeed, because of the frequently overlapping nature of local and national issues and the potential for local issues to receive the support of the national Solidarity leadership. Furthermore, the potential for escalation is high in a strategy of limited confrontation, given the regime's diminished negotiating flexibility and probable Soviet insistence that it stand firm in the event of confrontation.

⁴ This was evident in the 10 January speech of Kania in which he denounced "antisocialist" elements and "counterrevolutionaries" who were urging formation of the Rural Solidarity farmers union. It appears doubtful that the pending court case on the legal status of Rural Solidarity will culminate in its registration. The expulsion of demonstrators at the Nowy Sacz Town Hall on 11 January—under the threat of police force to end a sit-in—is a further indication of the Party's generally harder line.

Solidarity and the Workers

19. Solidarity is an unwieldy aggregation of 6 to 10 million Polish workers born of years of frustration and a shared sense of economic and social grievance. The average Solidarity member is probably motivated above all by the desire to improve his standard of living. His goals, improved pay and emoluments, tend to be immediate and his time horizon short. Solidarity is not an organization whose members share a common goal of political reform, and its leadership has refrained from articulating a program of political reform. Indeed, rank-and-file Solidarity demands for general political liberalization have been notable for their absence over the past chaotic months, except as they affect the workers' right to strike on behalf of material demands.

20. Inevitably, however, Solidarity's economic objectives have resulted in demands that have been essentially political.⁵ In addition, the workers have developed a fierce pride in their organization and its ability to pressure the authorities—this in itself marks a profound change in Polish political life. It is likely that some in the labor movement harbor ambitions for fundamental political changes (which may stand in contradiction to one another) but have held back from developing a political program in order to fend off charges that, ultimately, Solidarity aspires to become a political opposition. Furthermore, as Solidarity's political weight has grown and as its gains have altered the nation's political climate, other groups have been encouraged to organize and to seek the regime's recognition as legitimate interest groups with the right to participate in what is becoming an increasingly pluralistic political system.

21. Solidarity's national leadership consists of some 50 individuals elected on a regional basis, many of whom apparently identify closely with local labor grievances, a factor which may explain the divisiveness that besets the national body. Not surprisingly, the leadership—the National Coordinating Commission headed by Lech Walesa—is beset by dissension over goals, tactics, and philosophy. There are moderates around Walesa who generally favor avoiding con-

⁵ For example, the October-November dispute over the registration of Solidarity that focused on the union's formal recognition of the party's leading role, the threatened strike in late November over two workers arrested for allegedly stealing a secret government document, and pending demands for the further relaxation of censorship and the imposition of restrictions on the security forces.

frontation, limiting demands to economic issues, and emphasizing organization and consolidation of the movement. But there are also militants, who favor a policy of more direct pressure to prevent the regime from backsiding, and a third type who are more receptive to the regime's position than Walesa. But the composition of each grouping seems to be constantly shifting depending on the issue. At both the national and the regional levels Solidarity continues to draw upon the support of groups of experts consisting of dissident intellectuals associated with the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), with the movement for Civil and Human Rights (ROPCO), members of the legal profession, and advisers from the Catholic laity, some of whom act as emissaries from the episcopate. As open advocates of political liberalization and as longstanding critics of the regime, some of the dissidents have been publicly criticized as "antisocialists" by both the regime and the Soviets. Thus far, however, Walesa has refused to see them as political liabilities, although he clearly wants to avoid identifying Solidarity with KOR or its political reformist point of view.

22. The divisions in the Solidarity leadership and the inclusion of political dissidents create political vulnerabilities which the regime has attempted to exploit. But regime efforts to factionalize the Solidarity leadership, and thereby dilute its national authority, have thus far failed. A sense of common cause and a realization of the dangers of succumbing to factionalism have bound the union leadership together during past crises, despite its divisions. At the same time, to maintain unity, and to preserve his own leadership position, Walesa and other moderates have had to accommodate the harder line, as evidenced during the January dispute over the free Saturday issue. The question for the next few months is how the Solidarity leadership will behave as the regime toughens its stand. While internal disputes will continue to characterize the leadership, we believe that in future confrontations it will pull together rather than pull apart.

23. The ability of the national leadership to control the Solidarity rank and file is limited. In some instances Solidarity members have persisted in local protest actions in defiance of the entreaties of the national leadership. This situation increases the danger that confrontational positions assumed by local Solidarity chapters will burgeon into national confrontation because of the perceived need by the national leadership

to support its constituents or risk serious divisions within the movement. Rank and file discipline and retention of worker loyalty over time also depend on what progress Solidarity is able to achieve on workers' material demands (for example, on food, wages, and work hours). Given the economic disorder, however, and the widely recognized problems associated with meeting these demands in the next few months, it is unlikely that disappointment over consumption expectations will test rank-and-file loyalty to the national leadership over the next six months.

24. We expect that the near-term future will witness recurrent confrontation. Solidarity is likely to press the regime for implementation of the accords that settled last summer's strike wave. Solidarity is mindful of the regime's hardened position and its narrowed room for concession and, unless provoked (for example, by increased use of regime force or arrests of Solidarity members), is unlikely to press such political demands as the curtailing of police practices. The Solidarity leadership is aware of the fragility of the internal situation and that the regime will seek to use the fact of Soviet pressure to attenuate union demands and to elicit a more conciliatory policy. But it is also sensitive to the fact that a prolonged general strike would be perceived as a frontal challenge, and it will cross this Rubicon only as a last resort. We would foresee this as a response to regime actions that threatened the viability of Solidarity as an organization. Work actions such as the one-hour national strike on 3 October or selected boycotts are the tactics more likely to be adopted over the next few months. We believe that, faced with a prolonged general strike, the regime would feel it necessary to respond coercively to demonstrate its control and to preserve its own political position.

The Church

25. Since the Communist takeover the Polish Catholic Church has fiercely and successfully defended its independence and retained the loyalty of the country's overwhelmingly Catholic population. With the election of a Polish Pope, John Paul II, and his triumphant visit in June 1979, the Church has significantly enhanced its effectiveness as a political force. But it has always used its influence cautiously—usually behind the scenes—and has extended its support to the government in times of national crisis.

26. In early December, sensing that a Soviet military intervention was increasingly likely, both Cardinal Wyszynski, the Polish primate, and Pope John Paul II ended a somewhat ambiguous period of silence to urge calm and to ease the pressure on the regime. This is a position to which the Church now appears committed and which could be a decisive factor in future confrontations. We can expect to see the Church play a more outspoken role in urging moderation in future confrontations. In the present situation, the Church hierarchy has lent its support both to Solidarity and to the Kania regime, but has avoided committing itself to an alliance with either.

27. But the regime can retain the support of the Church only so long as it eschews the use of force. In addition, the Church has particular interests and will pose demands of its own—greater access to the media, church construction, expanded clerical and religious education, etc.—and therefore has a natural interest in encouraging a progressive, if cautious, liberalization, and in exacting its own political price from the regime for its support.

28. Under the impact of the prolonged crisis, not even the episcopate has escaped internal dissension: some elements of the clergy—especially the younger members—have questioned the wisdom of the strong support Cardinal Wyszynski was seen to have extended to the regime apparently at the expense of Solidarity. But the episcopate is likely to remain united under Wyszynski, who enjoys strong papal backing, and to continue to play a moderating role toward the regime, the workers, and the population at large. Wyszynski, however, is both aging and ailing, and his departure from the scene would leave a void that no successor could readily fill.

Other Actors

29. Solidarity has set a national example and created a license for the organization of similar interest groups, the establishment of which further dilutes party authority. For example, the organization of student unions and their petition to register as the legitimate voice of Poland's students has been accompanied by the weakening of the country's party-supported official student organizations. Liberalizing pressures have been in evidence in the writers' and journalists' communities. This spontaneous pluralization of the body politic, if it remains unchecked, could pose the

most important longer term threat both to the party and to Poland's experiment. We doubt that the party can eradicate such pressures in the near term. It may, however, be able to temporize on demands for legal registration of new unions. One social group whose demands the regime may not be able to temporize on is the farmers. The petition of Rural Solidarity (which claims to represent one-third of Poland's 3.5 million private farmers) for legal status akin to that of Solidarity could be the focus of the next confrontation in view of Kania's uncompromising stand against such an organization.

The USSR and the Warsaw Pact

30. Moscow has probably made it clear that, while the immediate problem is checking further deterioration, the Polish leadership's basic task must be to begin to reverse the trend. While we believe that the Soviets will not allow the present deteriorating situation to continue indefinitely, we doubt they have established a timetable for Kania. It is their continuing assessment of Polish events and Kania's reaction to them which will decide whether the Soviets forbear, increase pressure, or use military force.

31. The Soviets retain several options short of military intervention. If Kania is unable to achieve a solution acceptable to Moscow, the Soviets could opt for another change in leadership. Moscow also retains some political pressure tactics not fully utilized. We may see explicit public warnings from Soviet leaders and additional Warsaw Pact summit meetings in which the Soviets urge even a harder stance on the Polish leadership. There are also a number of military measures short of military intervention which the Soviets could undertake to induce additional moderation in Poland and stronger actions by the regime. They might conduct publicized military exercises along Poland's border, engage in small-scale Soviet-Polish exercises inside Poland, or even undertake a limited augmentation of Soviet forces in Poland.

32. The Soviets' reluctance to intervene militarily derives above all from the enormous costs they probably anticipate in eliminating Polish armed and passive resistance and in reestablishing a politically and economically viable Poland. Additional disincentives are the political and economic price they anticipate they would pay in their relations with Western nations, with the Third World, and within the interna-

tional Communist movement.⁶ In view of the obvious West European interest in maintaining stability in relations with the USSR, the Soviets might conclude that, while the inevitable damage to Soviet detente policies would be enormous, it would not necessarily be irretrievable. They might further conclude that efforts to portray the intervention as "legitimate," as an action undertaken in response to Polish requests with Polish collaboration, and as a limited move vital to the maintenance of politico-military stability in Europe could mitigate the setback to Soviet policies toward Western Europe and exacerbate differences between the United States and its allies. Another related Soviet consideration would be the anticipated US-NATO military response. It is unlikely that Moscow would foresee active Western military opposition. But Soviet intervention would surely alter NATO perceptions of Moscow's willingness to resort to force in crisis situations, and the Soviets would expect new Western efforts to augment NATO's force posture. This is not in itself, however, a calculation which would play a major role in staying a Soviet intervention.

33. Whatever the Soviet perception of such costs, they will quickly fade into secondary considerations if the Soviets see their vital interests threatened. We believe that one or another form of Soviet military intervention is likely in the event of:

- A breakdown of internal order in Poland.
- A frontal assault on the regime's authority, such as a general strike of some duration to which the regime did not respond decisively.

⁶ Another, more immediate consideration is probably the desire to avoid drastic military action prior to the late February congress of the Soviet Communist Party. Also important in any decision to intervene in Poland will be Moscow's anticipation of the economic costs, which could be considerable. While the Soviets cannot foretell the nature or the extent of resistance by the Polish labor force, they must contemplate the possibility of extended economic disruption as a result of widespread passive resistance and even industrial sabotage. The USSR would have to provide large-scale support for Poland to rebuild political stability and to minimize the effects of its economic shortfalls on trade and economic development elsewhere in Eastern Europe. We cannot predict the scale of Poland's economic difficulties in the wake of an invasion, but, as a conservative estimate of Soviet aid costs, we suggest an overall figure for food, fuel, raw materials, and various subventions to be the equivalent of \$10 billion per year. The Soviets almost certainly would not assume Poland's debt service costs to the West, but they could not ask Poland to renounce the debt because of the negative effect this would have on East European creditworthiness. Warsaw would probably declare a temporary moratorium on debt service payments and attempt to arrange rescheduling.

— Indications that the Polish regime was becoming unwilling or unable to meet its Warsaw Pact commitments.

34. In addition, we believe that the interplay of conditions such as the following would influence Soviet calculations in favor of intervention:

- The increasingly open display of anti-Soviet attitudes or phenomena in Poland on the part of the public or Solidarity, prompted by perceptions that the Soviets were preventing reforms.
- A marked diminution of the party's leading role in society.
- Prolonged continuation of the current instability.
- Growing repercussions from the Polish events elsewhere in Eastern Europe.⁷

35. It is improbable that the positions of other Warsaw Pact leaderships will have a decisive effect either in convincing the Soviets to use force or in restraining them. We believe that all Warsaw Pact leaderships in varying degrees oppose the longer term accommodation of the Polish leadership to Solidarity's demands, and feel potentially threatened by the trend of events. The lineup of East European attitudes toward Soviet military intervention would differ, depending on the form that it took or the circumstances under which it was initiated. East Germany and Czechoslovakia—those with the most immediate cause to worry—and probably Bulgaria would be willing to take part regardless of its scale or the form that it took. Moscow is likely to limit East German participation, however, given the history of Polish-German hostility. While the Romanians would not participate in an invasion, the Hungarians might feel compelled to provide a symbolic contingent of troops.

36. We believe that, barring the type of developments noted above, Moscow will continue to give Kania time, but little additional leeway to maneuver and make concessions. The Soviets will also increase

⁷ Determining the precise Soviet threshold of tolerance is made even more difficult by the likelihood of differences in perception of the situation among the Soviet leadership. In view of the complexity of Polish developments and the competing Soviet interests involved, achieving a leadership consensus on military intervention may involve prolonged debate.

pressure on Kania as necessary to move more decisively to bring the situation under control. This would involve resisting the escalating demands of Solidarity, students, and farmers; moving against dissidents; checking the push for greater democracy in the party; and maintaining the regime's police powers intact. The strategy of the Polish leadership has now in effect been determined by Moscow, and its options for dealing with the protracted crisis have been drastically narrowed. We believe that the Soviets are less hopeful than when Kania won his 5 December reprieve that he can in fact bring the situation satisfactorily under control. The trend is decidedly negative from the Soviet perspective.

V. THE MILITARY DIMENSION

Possible Coercive Options Open to the Regime

37. Obviously, the Polish leadership seeks to avoid the resort to force. But it has probably accepted that the limited application of force may now be necessary in implementing a policy which tries to hold the line against further union demands and in underwriting the credibility of its resolve. In early January for the first time the regime used the threat of force cautiously and successfully to break up two small occupations of provincial government buildings. Seeking to project both restraint and determination, the regime's hope is that such threats of force will serve to intimidate and restrain, rather than to provoke. We would expect to see a repetition of this kind of coercion at the local level.

38. Because its options for dealing with the domestic turmoil and Solidarity's challenge are narrower in comparison with the October-November period, the chances are greater that the regime will respond with force, probably at Soviet urging, if faced with a major confrontation such as a prolonged general strike or the threat of such a major confrontation. Thus we believe that it cannot afford politically under the present circumstances to exercise the degree of restraint which it demonstrated in the crises of August (when the Gierek regime rode out a massive wave of strikes for three weeks) and of October and November. Again, coercion would be used in a way designed to minimize the escalation of violence. For example, in response to the threat of a general strike we would foresee plant lockouts, the arrest of dissidents, and of some of the

more radical Solidarity leaders. In any such showdown, the regime would hope by the measured use of force to avoid violence and bloodshed. But the difficulties of manipulating force in such a tense situation are enormous, and the probability of an eruption of violence would be high.

39. If the regime decided to use force against strikers in one or more of the major industrial centers, units subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), regarded as the most politically reliable, would probably be committed first. In circumstances where the regime faced multiple strikes in a number of cities, such paramilitary forces would be inadequate because of their limited manpower and geographical availability. In either case, therefore, the regime would have to be prepared to support MIA units with troops from the regular armed forces. (This was the pattern in the 1970 disturbances when the regular police were backed up by regular units of the armed forces using tanks, armored personnel carriers, and helicopters.) Use of the armed forces to control civil disturbances, however, would come only after it was clear that forces of the MIA were incapable of maintaining or restoring order. We believe that Polish authorities would commit the regular military as a last resort in staving off Soviet military intervention.

40. We cannot predict how regular Army units would behave under such circumstances, especially if they were called upon to fire on Polish workers, and we believe similar doubts prevail in the Polish leadership.⁶ In all probability, the responses of different units

⁶ During the 1970 disturbances many soldiers apparently expressed sympathy with the demonstrators and followed orders only reluctantly. In addition, the use of the armed forces in 1970 had a demoralizing effect on the Army. For these reasons, party and military leaders alike expressed misgivings about using the Army under such circumstances, and the Eighth Plenum of the Polish Communist Party of February 1971 condemned the use of the military for mass internal repression. During the disturbances of June 1976, Polish Defense Minister Jaruzelski is widely reported to have told political leaders not to count on the Army, that "Polish soldiers will not fire on Polish workers." In the current crisis, a party spokesman stated in November that "the Polish Army will not take part in working out a political solution to the situation in the country." The fact that the national crisis has lasted so long and that Solidarity has stirred such sympathy in the population at large means that similar attitudes are reflected in the armed forces rank and file, and possibly in the officer corps. We know that the party and military leadership is monitoring military attitudes closely, and we have indications in some units of widely held support for Solidarity. This casts further doubt on Army dependability if called upon to oppose striking workers.

would vary,⁹ but on the whole we believe the picture would be one of disintegration in the armed forces and would be perceived as such by the Soviets. In circumstances in which martial law were declared, and the regular Army deployed before the outbreak of civil disturbances, it might remain intact and loyal to the regime. But we seriously doubt the Army's dependability if large-scale violence were to erupt. Under such conditions we do not believe the Polish Army alone would be capable of containing the situation. The introduction of regular Polish military forces under such circumstances would run a high risk of bringing about the intervention of Soviet forces.

Soviet Military Intervention

41. The Soviets actually began gradually to increase the preparedness of their forces in and around Poland as far back as late summer 1980, when Polish strikes began to pose a political threat to the Gierek regime. The measures taken during the following months included the establishment of communications that might be used in a military intervention in Poland, mobilization activities in selected units, and field training unusual for that time of year. By mid-November some mobilization activities had occurred in a small number of normally low-strength (category III) divisions in the western USSR. Most of the more ready (category II) divisions in the Soviet Military Districts along the Polish border had engaged in earlier training activity which had brought them to a higher state of preparedness. In late November military preparations were stepped up in the event that a political decision was taken for a movement of forces into Poland. A temporary restricted area along the East German-Polish border was put in effect until 9 December, and preparations were apparently undertaken for an unscheduled joint exercise.

42. The introduction of Warsaw Pact forces into Poland was apparently planned to take place under the guise of this joint military exercise with some cooperation from the Polish General Staff. Brezhnev all but confirmed such plans when he told Indian Prime Minister Gandhi on 8 December that the Soviets had planned maneuvers but postponed them be-

⁹ For example, the Polish airborne division (garrisoned in Krakow and numbering 3,500) is an elite unit considered among the most reliable of Polish armed forces and could be introduced quickly in any area of Poland.

cause of objections raised by Polish officials. The Soviets presumably believed that introducing troops under ambiguous circumstances would mitigate antagonistic responses from either the Polish population or the West. Moscow's precise intentions regarding the number of troops was not clear. The presumed mission, however, was to use such an exercise (similar to those which took place in Czechoslovakia in June and July 1968) to intimidate the Poles. Moscow may have intended to use its forces to backstop a crackdown by the Polish security forces.

43. The Soviets did not complete the mobilization required to bring most of their divisions in the western USSR to full readiness for movement in Poland. In retrospect, we believe that the November-December military preparations were undertaken in anticipation of a political decision which would determine whether military forces would be moved into Poland. Most of the increased readiness measures have been relaxed since mid-December and Soviet forces are now generally at routine readiness and activity levels. But the recent mobilization-related activities and training of elements of a potential invasion force improve their general state of preparedness and leave them capable of responding quickly to future developments.

44. The size of any Soviet intervention force would depend upon Moscow's assessment of likely resistance from the Polish Army and population. We estimate that, if the Soviets foresaw the possibility of significant, organized resistance from the Polish armed forces, they would intervene with a force of at least 30 divisions. We believe they could ready such a force and activate all of the necessary communications in 10 to 14 days. If the Soviets were to undertake the kind of intervention they apparently planned in November and December under the guise of a joint exercise, we estimate an intervention force of some 20 divisions could be readied within about a week. A substantially smaller force involving some half dozen divisions (or more, depending on the extent to which the Soviets drew on their ready divisions in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) could be readied in about two to three days, but we think it unlikely, given the possibility of resistance, that the Soviets would actually intervene with such a small force.

45. Under any intervention conditions, Moscow will seek to enlist the backing of the Polish leadership and to co-opt the Polish General Staff. They would prob-

ably hope that Polish security forces would take the lead in domestic repression, leaving Soviet forces to concentrate on maintaining order and crushing armed resistance. They would also try to maximize the ambiguities of their move into Poland by utilizing such pretexts as "exercises" in order to minimize the possibility of full-scale military resistance by the Poles and in an attempt to lessen the international costs. We do not believe that the Polish military would present armed opposition organized under central authority, although isolated units under individual commanders might react to a Soviet move. Such resistance would not provide a serious or prolonged obstacle to Soviet military objectives in Poland.

46. If the Soviets do decide to intervene in the future we would expect a sequence of preparations similar to what we saw from late November to mid-December. Additional steps that would be taken would include a callup of reservists for a much larger number of divisions, logistic preparations at civilian vehicle parks, military motor transport garrisons, and ammunition depots. Preparations for intervention would become progressively more intense at individual garrisons and more widespread across the force, and probably among East German, Czechoslovak, and possibly other East European forces, as the Soviets neared full readiness for an intervention.

47. Soviet forces will soon begin participating in annual multinational and joint forces training exercises. As this training becomes more intense, it could complicate the Polish warning problem by providing the Soviets with an opportunity to disguise preparations for intervention. Despite these ambiguities, however, we believe that the size of the larger intervention forces we postulate, their command characteristics, their geographic scope, the required logistic preparations, and the extent of preparations required will differentiate this activity from normal training and permit us to identify its true nature, especially as the intervention becomes more imminent. The Director, Bureau of Research and Intelligence, Department of State agrees that we would probably be able to detect, and to distinguish from exercise activity, Soviet preparations for an "invasion" of Poland in which 30 or more divisions would be readied to cope with possible significant Polish military resistance; but he is concerned that we might not be able to distinguish con-

fidently or in a timely manner between the large-scale maneuvers we expect at this time of year and the preparations that would be needed to introduce a substantial number of Soviet divisions (that is, 15 to 20) into Poland under the guise of an exercise like the one we believe was contemplated last December.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

48. The situation in Poland continues to show a high degree of instability. The pattern of the past months, in which tensions have mounted and subsided in response to events and to the reactions to them of the major actors, is likely to continue, barring a decisive application of force. There is little prospect over the next six months that Solidarity's demands will abate. On the contrary, the union leadership is determined to press for implementation of concessions obtained in summer strike settlements and is being increasingly influenced by the more militant elements of its constituency. The regime continues to be in an essentially reactive position, although it has adopted a harder line in dealing with the workers. It can no longer make major concessions to union demands without jeopardizing its own position and increasing the risk of Soviet intervention. The only politically viable response, therefore, seems to be a still tougher policy, which may require the expanded use of force.

49. All Poles share an interest in avoiding Soviet intervention, and therefore in containing tensions. But this has failed to stabilize the union-regime relationship—that is, to give rise to a working relationship which can manage persistent conflict. It does, however, impose a measure of restraint on both sides. It is possible that a pattern of negotiation will develop between regime and unions which will help to subdue the level of tension at least for the next half year if the pattern of haphazard confrontation continues. Both the party and Soviet leaderships can probably tolerate continuing sporadic and isolated strikes, and this in itself is unlikely to require the regime to use massive force against workers or to precipitate a Soviet intervention. In short, the situation could be one of extended, but controlled, conflict. Further, it is possible that under such circumstances the regime could gain the upper hand by pursuing a cautious policy designed to undermine the union's strength.

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50. It is difficult to believe, however, that in such a potentially volatile setting, and with the authority of both the party and the union diffused, such a situation can last. Miscalculation by the regime or the union could occur as either pressed its position in an attempt to probe the other side's position. A precipitous increase in tensions—for example, a new general strike threat on behalf of Rural Solidarity registration—could occur.

51. We believe that Soviet military activities in November and December demonstrate that the Soviets

are in fact willing to intervene militarily. As time passes and if the regime shows no convincing progress in consolidating the party and gaining control of events, the Soviets are likely to conclude that nonintervention options are insufficient. We cannot say exactly when this might be or what specific combination of events might finally bring the Soviets to that decision. We believe that Soviet pressure on the Polish regime will increase and that, if the pattern of domestic confrontation continues, the trend is toward ultimate intervention.

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